

Q. Given what Americans and the French went through in the last century, are you upset by their attitude now?

President Bush. No, I wouldn't—"upset" isn't the proper word. I am disappointed that France would block NATO from helping a country like Turkey prepare. I don't understand that decision. It affects the Alliance in a negative way.

Q. You think it does?

President Bush. I think it affects the Alliance in a negative way, when you're not able to make a statement of mutual defense. I had a good talk with Jacques Chirac recently. I assured him that, you know, that we would continue to try to work with France as best we can. France has been a long-time friend of the United States. We've got a lot in common. But I think the decision on NATO is shortsighted in my judgment. Hopefully, they'll reconsider.

Reasons for Action Against Iraqi Regime

Q. Mr. President, there are many Australians—there are many Australians and others who are still not convinced that they should be going with you to war. At this late stage, what's your personal message to them?

President Bush. My personal message is that I want to keep the peace and make the world more peaceful. I understand why people don't like to commit the military to action. I can understand that. I'm the person in this country that hugs the mothers and the widows if their son or husband dies. I know people would like to avoid armed conflict, and so would I. But the risks of doing nothing far outweigh the risks of whatever it takes to disarm Saddam Hussein.

I've thought long and hard about this issue. My job is to protect the American people from further harm. I believe that Saddam Hussein is a threat to the American people. I also know he's a threat to our friends and allies.

The second thing—my message is, and I started speaking about this today, I also have got great compassion and concern for the Iraqi people. These are people who have been tortured and brutalized, people who have been raped because they may disagree with Saddam Hussein. He's a brutal dictator. In this country and in Australia, people be-

lieve that everybody has got worth, everybody counts, that everybody is equal in the eyes of the Almighty. So the issue is not only peace, the issue is freedom and liberty.

I made it clear in my State of the Union—and the people of Australia must understand this—I don't believe liberty is America's gift to the world. I believe it is God's gift to humanity.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:46 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq and President Jacques Chirac of France.

Message on the Observance of Eid al-Adha

January 27, 2003

I send greetings to Muslims in the United States and around the world as you celebrate the Eid al-Adha holiday.

The Qur'an teaches that the sacred feast of Eid al-Adha is a time for Muslims to join family and friends in thanking the Almighty for His many blessings and to reflect on the great sacrifice and devotion of Abraham. During this festive celebration, peace-loving people around the world, including millions of American Muslims, honor Abraham's example by sharing love and demonstrating compassion for those in need.

This year's celebration comes at a time when our world faces great challenges and important opportunities. The United States remains committed to promoting justice, tolerance, and understanding through-out the world, and we will continue to work together with our Muslim friends and people of all faiths to build a future of peace, freedom, and opportunity for all.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a joyous celebration.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 11. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

**Remarks Prior to a Meeting With
Congressional Leaders**

February 11, 2003

Judicial Nominee Miguel A. Estrada

It's my pleasure to welcome members of both political parties from the House of Representatives to discuss how we can continue to make progress in welfare reform. The welfare law of 1996 made a significant difference in the lives of a lot of our fellow citizens. Our job now is to build on that progress, and I want to thank the Members for being here. I look forward to a good and fruitful discussion.

I nominated a good man named Miguel Estrada for the Circuit Court here in Washington, DC. Miguel Estrada is highly qualified, extremely intelligent. He has the votes necessary to be confirmed. Yet a handful of Democrats in the Senate are playing politics with his nomination. And it's shameful politics. This man is highly qualified, and I expect him to be nominated. And I expect him to get fairer treatment than he's getting from those who are really playing against the spirit of the United States Senate. And so I call upon fair play in the Senate, for the sake of a good, sound judiciary.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:38 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Miguel A. Estrada, nominee to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

**Statement on Senate Action on the
Nomination of Miguel A. Estrada To
Be United States Circuit Judge for
the District of Columbia Circuit**

February 11, 2003

Last week, the Senate began floor consideration of the nomination of Miguel Estrada to the DC Circuit Court of Appeals. Mr. Estrada's nomination was first submitted to the Senate in May 2001—almost 2 years ago. Miguel Estrada is a well-qualified and well-respected nominee who enjoys the bipartisan support of a majority of Senators. Fairness

demands that he receive an up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. I urge the Senate to act quickly and allow for an up-or-down vote on this worthy candidate.

**Message to the Senate Transmitting
Amendments to the 1987 Treaty on
Fisheries Between the Governments
of Certain Pacific Island States and
the Government of the United States
of America, With Annexes**

February 11, 2003

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith Amendments to the 1987 Treaty on Fisheries Between the Governments of Certain Pacific Island States and the Government of the United States of America, with Annexes and agreed statements, done at Port Moresby, April 2, 1987 (the "Treaty"), done at Koror, Palau, March 30, 1999, and at Kiritimati, Kiribati, March 24, 2002. I also transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Secretary of State with respect to these Amendments, related Amendments to the Treaty Annexes, and the Memorandum of Understanding regarding provisional application.

The United States enjoys positive and constructive fisheries relations with the Pacific Island Parties through the implementation and operation of the Treaty, which is one of the cornerstones of our overall foreign relations with the Pacific Island Parties. This Treaty, and the good relationships it has fostered, has provided new opportunities for collaboration between the Pacific Island Parties and the United States on fisheries conservation and management issues. The relationships established as a result of the Treaty have also helped to safeguard U.S. commercial and security interests in the region.

The Amendments to the Treaty will, among other things, allow U.S. longline vessels to fish in high seas portions of the Treaty Area; streamline the way amendments to the Treaty Annexes are agreed; and allow the Parties to consider the issue of capacity in the Treaty Area and, where appropriate, to promote consistency between the Treaty and